

FREE!



WWW.GAMERZINES.COM

EMAIL THIS MAGAZINE TO A FRIEND



Click Here → Cover | Contents | Previews | Interview | Reviews | Subscribe now

Issue 3 | March 2007

360Zine

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

EVERY NEW GAME REVIEWED

CRACKDOWN

Take to the streets as a sandbox superhero!

SAMURAI WARRIORS 2: EMPIRES

BATTLESTATIONS: MIDWAY

FUZION FRENZY 2

PLUS! HANDS-ON PLAYTEST

TOM CLANCY'S GRAW 2

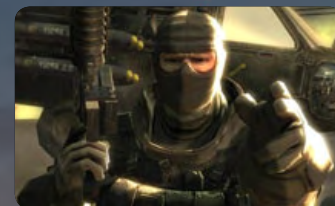
**PLUS!
EXCLUSIVE
CRACKDOWN
INTERVIEW**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

MAJOR NELSON

Xbox Live's Director of
Programming talks to 360Zine

ALSO INSIDE!



**1 BLACK SITE:
AREA 51**

Preview & video inside



**2 UNREAL
TOURNAMENT III**

New name. New info



3 HOUR OF VICTORY

Exclusive first look

PLUS LOADS MORE!

HELP

PRINT 360Zine

SAVE 360Zine

SEARCH 360Zine

ZOOM IN

ZOOM OUT

TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW

NEXT PAGE



Welcome to 360Zine



After a typically slow start to the year, 2007 is beginning to shape up nicely. This issue sees the arrival of Crackdown and within a matter of days you'll be able to take to the streets as a superhero hellbent on clearing out all the riff-raff: don't miss our exclusive interview starting on page 9, followed up with the definitive review on page 18.

Elsewhere, Battlestations: Midway looks set to do the business (having just taken the top spot in the All Formats UK games chart at the time of writing). Other highlights this issue include a gripping hands-on playtest of GRAW 2, an in-depth look at the next 360 frag-fest that is Blacksite: Area 51, and an exclusive audio interview with Xbox Live's Major Nelson.

Enjoy the issue, and please email me to let me know your thoughts on all things Xbox 360.

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



Crackdown
INTERVIEW & REVIEW!
Take to the streets as a superhero



Major Nelson
Exclusive Live
interview PAGE 28

GRAW 2
HANDS-ON
Multiplayer
goes large
PAGE 12

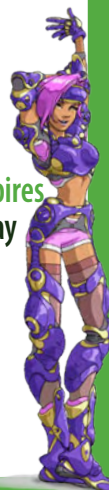


Samurai Warriors 2: Empires
Returning Japanese
PAGE 21

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Hour of Victory
Unreal Tournament III
C&C Tiberium Wars
Turok
Two Worlds
Halo 3
Mass Effect
GRAW 2
Blacksite: Area 51
Crackdown
Samurai Warriors 2: Empires
Battlestations: Midway
Fuzion Frenzy 2
Heavy Weapon:
Atomic Tank
Ms. Pac-Man
Lumines Live



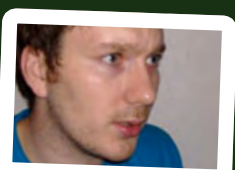
MEET THE TEAM

Probably the
best games
writers on the
planet



Jason D'Aprile

Jason D'Aprile is a freelance writer, editor, and giant hammer salesman in the US.



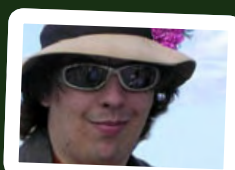
Lee Hall

Busy, busy, busy. Lee has been unearthing all the latest inside info on upcoming titles.



Steve Hill

Down with the kids, Steve has been living out his dream of a life on the streets with Crackdown.



Ian Morris

Aside from larking about on XBLA Ian's been ruling over his fiefdoms in Samurai Warriors 2: Empires.

HOUR
VICTORY

Publisher: Midway

Developer: nFusion

Heritage: Line Of Sight:

Vietnam, Elite Warriors:

Vietnam

Link: www.midway.com

ETA: Summer

"Expect blood-curdlingly realistic physics and some real purdy locales to crap on with bombs"

Ill-equipped British soldiers – clearly not a new phenomenon.



The SAS: so hard, they wear a chic beret instead of a helmet.



FIRST LOOK

Hour Of Victory

Prepare for a World War Threesome

What's the story?

Don't be complacent, soldier. You may feel you know World War Two soldiering after earning your stripes on the likes of Call of Duty, but HOF is a whole new game of soldiers...

What do we know?

Here you lace up your puss-filled combat boots as one of three troops, each with his own arsenal and playing style. There's Major Taggart, a US secret service man who specialises in creeping up on men and opening their neck with a blade, and Sergeant Blackbull, an American sniper who hides like a girl and notches kills without getting his hands dirty.

Then there's Lieutenant William Ross, an SAS hardass who goes in for all-out blazing as an assault specialist. Our sources tell us Ross removes objects from his path with all the sensitivity of the FBI clearing a commune of religious nuts. We can't wait.

As well as your individual quest for glory in the slog through Europe and North Africa, you'll be able to play with friends on Xbox Live. When we say 'play' we of course mean 'maim'.

When do we get more?

We're hoping for beta play in the next couple of months, so stay tuned for a full preview.

Anything else to declare?

The game is built on the Unreal 3 engine, which means you can expect blood-curdlingly realistic physics and some real purdy locales to crap on with bombs, guns and the bile of folk who stand in your way.

THE SEQUEL TO
THE BAFTA GAME OF THE YEAR



[REPLAY THIS VIDEO](#)

Tom Clancy's
**GHOST
RECON**
ADVANCED WARFIGHTER

IN STORES MARCH 2007



ask
about
games
.com



www.ghostrecon.com

© 2007 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ghost Recon, Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, the Soldier icon, Ubisoft, Ubi.com and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. Mobile version © 2007 Gameloft. All Rights Reserved. Gameloft and the Gameloft logo are registered trademarks of Gameloft S.A.



UBISOFT



Publisher: Midway

Developer: Epic

Heritage: UT series, Gears Of War

Link: www.midway.com

ETA: October

Patience fella. Not long to wait now...

FIRST LOOK

Unreal Tournament III

It's the name of the game...

What's the story?

Straight-forward revenge. It's the 23rd century and you're battling against mega mining corporations to avenge the death of your slaughtered family. The big story being that there is a story, in a series traditionally associated with deathmatch face-offs. That said, multiplayer carnage is still on the menu too.

What do we know?

UT III's name has just been changed from UT 2007 – which is hopefully a nod to the fact that we'll be playing it well into next year and not a signal of further slippage from the October release date.

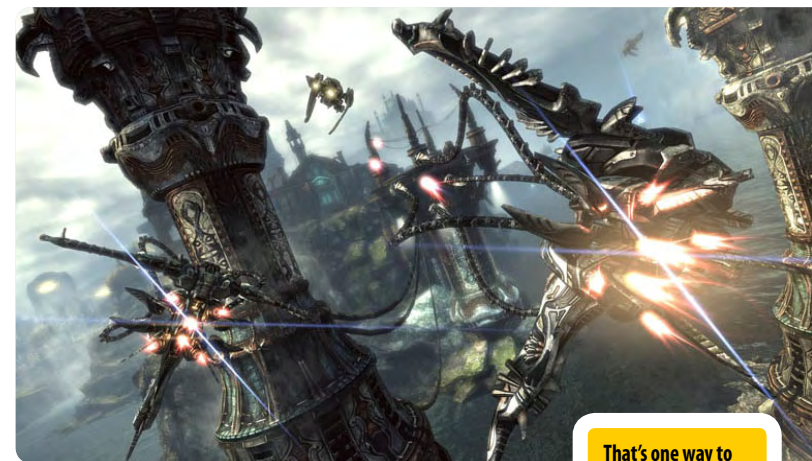
The game has only just been confirmed for 360 too, and features intense battling with souped up weaponry aimed at the Necris, Unreal's alien race who just got meaner and are hell bent on doing evil.

When do we get more?

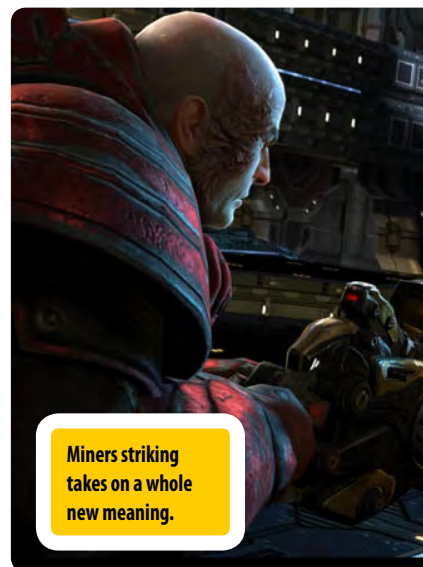
It's in good shape now, so we expect some hands-on action jolly soon.

Anything else to declare?

In an interesting aside, there's been official talk for the first time that UTIII may feature cross-platform support enabling 360 players to line up PC nerds in their sights. Producer Jeff Morris has been crowing about the possibility of this, citing control balance as a potential stumbling block. But with USB keyboards for 360 already available we could well be set for an Epic tussle with our typewriter-playing brethren.



That's one way to dodge the congestion charge.



Miners striking takes on a whole new meaning.

READER REQUESTS! Click here to tell us what you'd like to see in UT III!



INTERACTIVE CONTENT: CLICK PLAY TO SEE THE UT III VIDEO



 REPLAY THIS VIDEO

2013 AD.

Humanity hangs on the verge of extinction. An army of evil, twisted monsters walk the Earth.

Just as the few survivors are accepting the end of civilization, a beautiful woman appears before them, dressed in black, with the magic powers of a witch and a hefty staff-like weapon, the Gun-Rod.

Her name... Alicia.

**A WITCH BURDENED WITH UNDESIRED MAGIC
AND GUNPLAY POWERS.**

BULLET WITCH



Out 9th March

ONLY ON
XBOX 360

XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE

AQ INTERACTIVE

16+
www.pegi.info

ATARI

© 2007 ATARI EUROPE SASU, All rights reserved © 2006 AQ Interactive Inc. All rights reserved.

www.atari.com

SEARCH 360zine? PRINT THIS PAGE  ZOOM IN  ZOOM OUT  TOGGLE FULL SCREEN VIEW  PREVIOUS PAGE  NEXT PAGE 

INCOMING

Our pick of the new releases coming in 2007

Command & Conquer: Tiberium Wars

Exclusive
New
Screen!



Publisher: EA | ETA: TBC

Underwhelmed by their Lord Of The Rings RTS, we've high hopes for EA's latest Command & Conquer – and it doesn't look like we're going to be disappointed.

Controls and visual effects have been tweaked to high heaven for this near future battler with Xbox Live support and teeming, smoking battlefields.

Turok



Exclusive
New
Screen!

Publisher: Buena Vista | ETA: December

The peculiar appeal of hunting down dinosaurs has been keeping this first-person series afloat for many a moon. Turok's step into the next gen theatre, however, promises to deliver more realistic earth-shuddering reptilian foes than ever. Pretty much for that reason alone it's already slipped onto our most wanted list.



Two Worlds

Publisher: South Peak | ETA: December

This sprawling RPG is also set for a PC release earlier in the year, with a newly announced massively multiplayer option already causing a stir. This Polish developed project brings the promise of endless character development and has us tingling in anticipation.

Halo 3

Publisher: Microsoft | ETA: Late 2007

Due to go into beta this spring, the only way you get to play the pre-release version of Halo 3 is if you buy Crackdown. The game proper is still several months away, but promises to tie-up the trilogy and give you the chance to strike a decisive blow against the invading alien Covenant.



Mass Effect

Publisher: Microsoft | ETA: TBA

It may have slid out of sight like a tightwad on his round at the pub, but Mass Effect is still looking good. An Xbox 360 exclusive designed by the noggins behind Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, this sci-fi RPG features squad-based action as well as the usual bevie of quests.

UPCOMING

SPRING 2007

● UEFA Champions League 2006-2007 March

● Bullet Witch March

● Burnout 5 May

SUMMER 2007

● Forza Motorsport 2 May

● Stuntman 2 Summer

AUTUMN 2007

● UT III October

● GTA IV October

WINTER 2007

● Fable 2 Late 2007

● Resident Evil 5 Late 2007

coming
march 2007

SAMURAI WARRIORS 2

戦国無双

Empires



REPLAY THIS VIDEO

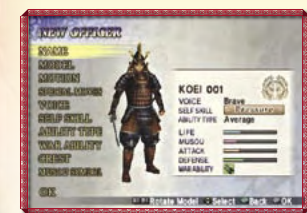
Action and strategic gameplay come together!

Japan has divided into warring states and you must resurrect a nation! At each war council, consult with your officers to decide upon military and political affairs, then march into enemy territory to reunite the country.



unleash vicious multi-musou attacks with up to four warriors!

6 regional and 5 unification scenarios, plus new policy cards based on Japan's past — 90 cards in all!

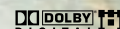


create your own warrior in new officer mode. Also team up in 2-player co-op play.

12+
www.pegi.info



PlayStation 2



Produced by
Force

Samurai Warriors and the KOEI logo are registered trademarks of KOEI Co., Ltd. ©2006-2007 KOEI Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logos, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. "Dolby", "Pro Logic", and the double-D symbol are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories. All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

"FEEL LIKE A SUPERHERO"

The much-awaited Crackdown from Realtime Worlds is finally here. 360Zine spoke exclusively to release manager James Cope.

READ THE REVIEW!
Click here to go to the in-depth review of Crackdown!

Jim Cope Biography

"Jim came to Crackdown from a background of software engineering and project management. He has numerous years worth of experience in the mobile telecoms, digital media broadcasting and embedded systems markets where he's worked on emerging technology projects for companies such as Microsoft, Sony and the BBC."

The wait is nearly over and after four years in the making next week sees the release of Crackdown. Time to get ready to take on the crims as a superhero...

With Crackdown creative director Dave Jones having effectively created a gaming genre with GTA, what was the pressure like to follow that up?

I think the pressure was immense. Dave's vision of GTA was always much bigger than what it turned into and he really wanted to follow that through with Crackdown by creating not just a 2D map. He wanted the player to be able to roam the city completely, have this dynamic city going on in the background that the player could really, really feel part of – interact with, rather than interact on. The vertical scope of the game was really evident from day one so you've got this massive platformy-based game in a sandbox environment. As a superhero you can run around or jump over buildings, it's very different to the GTA approach where it's fairly linear, it's fairly flat.

What is the split between driving and on foot?

It's really down to the player. If a player feels that they can get from point A to point B in a car faster, they can do that. As the player develops the skills of their agent more they'll find that it could be faster to jump over a building than it is to drive round it, and that's exactly the sort of scope we have. The



developments of the agent's skill set leads into unlocking new bits of gameplay, not directly and obviously, but it's down to the player to find that. They have this toolbox to play in and it's just a whole world of emergent gameplay that they can find.

Don't you think gamers need an objective? Can they think for themselves?

What we've tried to do is come up with a balance between dragging the player along enough to gain the story to keep their interest in the game, but leaving them to tackle those story ideas in whatever way they see fit. We've got a little bit of a story behind the game but it's largely there to explain key scenarios and things like that. But the player can approach those in any order. We've got a good balance between a driven story

and an emergent world because the player at any point can go off and do what they want and come back to it.

Dave Jones recently said that this game's not going to sell on the strength of the screenshots. That's a slightly Ratner-esque thing to say. Was it a gamble going for that whole graphic novel look?

I think given the fact that we always knew that it wasn't going to look right until the very end of the game, it was a bit of a gamble. But our art director, Jeff Cairns, he always had the vision to go through with this. He always knew where he wanted to go in terms of what he was going to end up with. A lot of the technology and tools weren't in place at the beginning of the game so some of the screenshots we put out early in the life cycle were really



Lock on to criminals and take off a limb.

Pacific City - full of wrong 'uns.



> Interview continued

misleading, they were just a bit too garish. When you see the finished game and how it moves and works together, we've got this completely unique visual style.

The key difference from GTA and all the various spin-offs is that you play the cops and not the robbers, effectively. Was that subverting the whole thing or did it just work better with the style of game?

I think Dave was very particular in the fact that we've done bad guys versus good guys – let's try and turn the tables, let's have a really, really over the top good guy. Because when people are given these big toys to play with they generally have a laugh, and it fits better into the context of a superhero than it does a supervillain. We wanted to have a crime-fighting thing, not just to set us apart but to set us up as something new - it's a new franchise.

As your agent gets stronger, would you admit that there's a pseudo-RPG element to it?

Yeah, the vision for the RPG element of it was always a bit grander. We wanted to keep the RPG side of it as simple as possible, we just wanted a skill progression system that would make the player empowered and actually feel like a superhero rather than knowing you've got superpowers from the start. We wanted the player to develop their skill set in terms of how they were playing the game.

"As a superhero you can run around or jump over buildings"

We've got to ask you about the Halo 3 beta thing. Is this something that Microsoft foisted upon you? Is it almost a case of Halo beta with a free game of Crackdown, or is that too cynical?

It is very easy to observe it in that way, it's very easy to be cynical, but we're absolutely overjoyed to have it in because it leads to more people playing the game. It's from a very well known developer, but Dave can't ride on the reputation in terms of GTA because it's a very different thing. So when we were offered the chance to do this we just leapt at it because whenever anyone plays this game they just love it.

Why do it on the 360 and what benefits has the console brought?

The game's got a lot of history behind it - it's been in development for four years now so it started off as a Microsoft game anyway on the Xbox. It was brought over to the 360 and we had problems with that, but the fundamental point is, the 360 is an absolutely stonkingly powerful machine. And Live is just an absolutely awesome invention. To get a game like this on Live, playing against your mates 200 miles away or on the other side of the planet - what else? ●



Developer: Realtime Worlds

Publisher: Microsoft

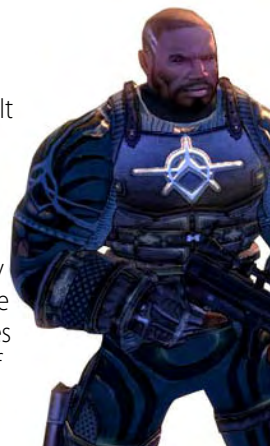
Players: 1-2 (Live)

Certificate: M for Mature

Features: Driving, shooting, jumping, running

Heritage: GTA, Lemmings

ETA: 23rd February 2007



HandheldGamerZine



Launches Thursday February 22nd

Don't miss issue #1



SONY PSP

Sid Meier's Pirates
Chili Con Carnage
Rainbow Six: Vegas
Champ Man 2007

NINTENDO DS

Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis
Pro Evolution Soccer 6 Theme Park

PLUS! LOADS MORE...



NEW! Handheld Gamer Magazine

WWW.GAMERZINES.COM

EMAIL THIS MAGAZINE TO A FRIEND

Issue 1 | February 2007

HGZine

Free Magazine For PSP and DS Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

HUGE PSP REVIEW!

Sid Meier's Pirates!

All aboard the PSP

FREE!
Spread the word...
Click here to send HGZine to your mates

PLUS MORE PSP!
Luncheon Siege: Throne of Agony
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas
Chili Con Carnage
Championship Manager 2007

HGZine
★★★★
Completely free of charge
Passionate about videogames
Dedicated to handheld
Written by the best in the biz
★★★★

EXCLUSIVE DS REVIEW!

PES 6

At last! Pro Evo makes it on to DS
PLUS MORE DS!
Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis
Theme Park
Sudoku

Click Here → Cover | Contents | News | Previews | Interview | Reviews | Compo

Zoom Out Toggle Full Screen View Next Page

HANDS-ON

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

Itchy trigger finger? We can't wait either...

As another Mexican rebel slumps to the ground, downed by a rapid spray of half a dozen bullets to the chest, you can't help but feel a little sick. The reality of advanced warfare, you see, is that for all the technology at your disposal success and failure still comes down to callous,

clinical human destruction.

The brilliance of GRAW 2, a game we've handled in bursts ahead of next month's review, is that it perfectly captures the intimacy of close combat while empowering the player with hi-tech weaponry on a colossal scale.

The demo mission alone introduces

GRAW2 isn't also sniping and sneaking - your squad packs some heat.

"Close combat with hi-tech weaponry on a colossal scale"

Helicopters: like planes that can't really fly..



can carry enough ammo and kit to replenish you and your squad, which includes a nifty sniper rifle in the demo mission.

This being GRAW, the sniper rifle has the ability to prick through thin cover, which enables you to pull off some of the most satisfying – and not to say damned cowardly – kills in gaming history. What sort of a soldier hides half a mile from a concealed enemy and pops a round in his face without even announcing their presence?

Well, us. And it was darned entertaining.

The meat of GRAW has always been the squad dynamic, which enables you to direct a team of operatives who can provide support, covering fire and even decoys as you plot your way through tense missions.

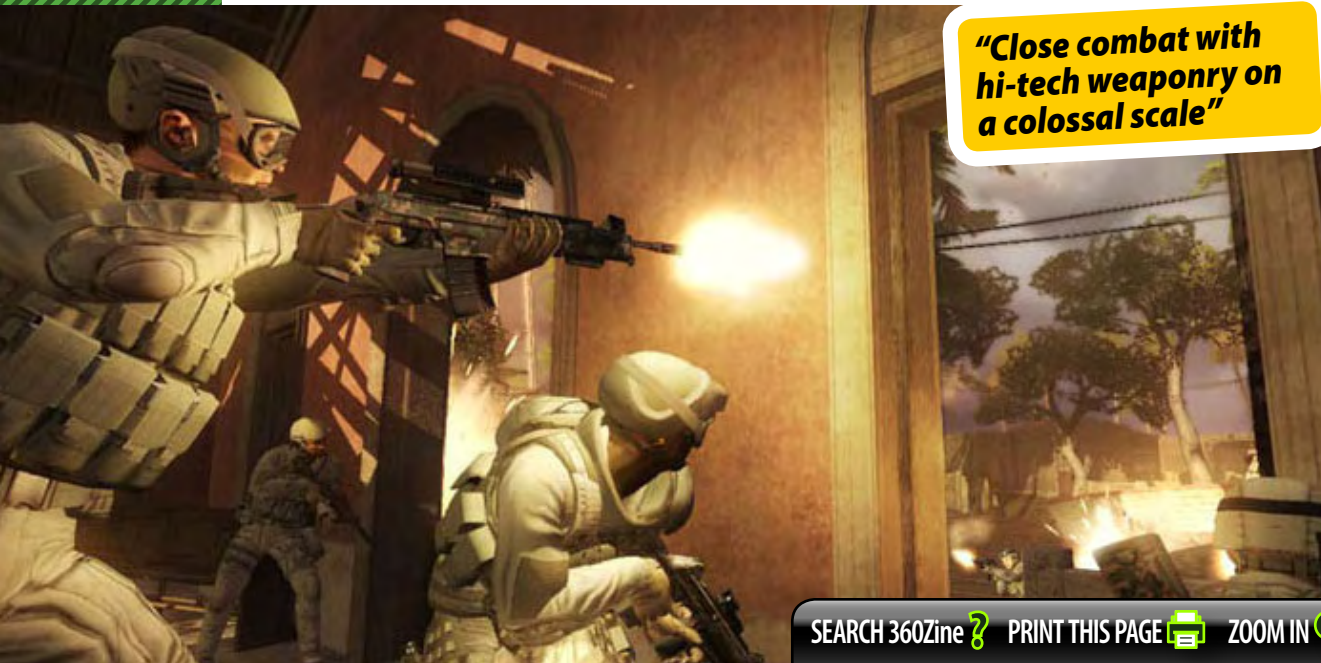
This facet of play is now more engaging thanks to the fact that you can switch to one of your team-mates' perspective and command the movement of your troops from there, opening up gameplay to far more sophisticated tactical assaults.

As ever, our time with GRAW 2 reveals the game's AI is spot on, so this core single player action that's at the game's heart looks just as compelling as ever.

you to the killing machines at your disposal (Live Gold members try it now – it's short but very sweet). The upgraded UAV radar drone is now fully controllable, offering you a top-down view of the battle and picking up the heat signatures of your enemies so you can plot your route through the sandy first few moments of play.

A new Mule vehicle can also be remotely controlled and positioned in the field to offer cover, comms info from the boys back at base, and – most importantly of all – extra weaponry.

Doing the job of its four-legged namesake, this destructible pack horse



Pick off enemies without getting your hands mucky.



FOUR PLAY

Getting to grips with multiple partners

GRAW 2's multiplayer looks set to be killer. As well as enabling you to establish clans with up to 100 members so you can challenge the best of the rest, spawn camping has been banished with a new improved respawn system. The graphics are closer to the single player game too, with plenty of delicious maps to despoil with wanton gunplay. Here's four of the prettiest...



1. Back Alley

2. Crash Site

3. Aftermath

4. Lagoon

1. Back Alley

Tense urban combat in a rabbit warren of side streets.
Good for: Grenade slaughter on bunched team members.

> GRAW 2 continued

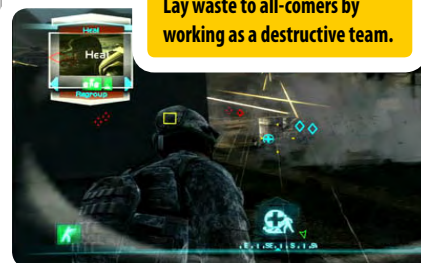
The missions here are mostly less claustrophobic than those which unfold in the original's urban locales. GRAW 2 is set in 2014, just after the first game as you reprise the role of Captain Scott Mitchell to ghost through the deserts of Mexico and take out missiles with 'destroy US cities' on their 'to do' lists.

The game has a familiar feel for those who tip-toed through the original, offering challenging engagements where you can't round corners and come out blasting and expect to survive.

GRAW 2 certainly follows hot on the heels of its predecessor, so it's very much a 'more' sequel, offering extra weapons, gadgets and a new story to tempt those who knew and loved the original.

Amazingly, much-trumpeted graphical improvements make a genuine difference to gameplay. GRAW now looks a touch more polished and realistic, thanks largely to some tasty particle effects, but these changes actually add to the playing experience.

It's not only atmospheric, for instance, to be guiding your troops



Lay waste to all-comers by working as a destructive team.

under the vapour trails of raining mortar fire, but the smoke patterns they wisp in the air give vital clues about where your assailants are firing from. And in turn, where you can call in the big bombs to clear you a path.

GRAW's 'more is more' policy is most apparent in the online play, which turned it into such a hit on Xbox Live (see FOUR PLAY).

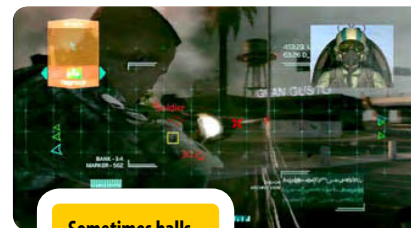
There are 18 maps, ranging widely in size from the tense and tiny to the big and bloody. And as well as all the vanilla modes from the original game

and downloads, there are seven new ways to annihilate friend and foe.

One of the picks is Team Takedown, a respawn-based team elimination game – like team sharpshooter, only with a designated officer. Your leader gets extra points for kills, but must be protected from your rival team, a dynamic that causes you the headache of trying to protect him while secreting him in advanced positions to boost your scoring.

Sadly, online play is still restricted to 16 players, but we find that more than enough to ensure our recurring death.

In all GRAW 2 looks every inch a better game than it's forerunner, but we'll know exactly how much this soldier has smartened up next issue when we let the review bullets fly... ●



Sometimes balls-out firefight can't be avoided.



See read... shoot it dead. And everything else with 100yards, for that matter.

360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

More GRAW – it's time to go to war

BLACKSITE
AREA 51

Publisher: Midway

Developer: Midway

Studios Austin

Heritage: Area 51, Tribes:

Aerial Assault

Link: www.midway.com

ETA: Summer

FIRST LOOK

Blacksite: Area 51

Space Invaders... taken to a whole new level

It's that moment in every battle that fills you half with dread, half with relief. It's the split second that the action kicks-off, the calm gives way to the storm and the lead starts flying. It's the moment you appreciate that only your will to survive, skill with your weapon and the grit of your comrades

will see you through. That's the moment Blacksite: Area 51 aims to capture and hold in your imagination...

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here.... Take a sec to check out the video footage we've snaffled for you, then come back. Go on – it's worth it. Back? Good. Looks awesome doesn't it?

Aliens: like humans, but spindly and crooked.

"Where Gears Of War and Lost Planet have lead, Blacksite follows and goes further"

We reckon Blacksite is set to do what your white dream machine does so well – offer unprecedented scale as well as flawless detail to complement superb gameplay. Where Gears Of War and Lost Planet have lead with screen-filling, ground rumbling beasts, Blacksite follows and goes further...

Raining from the skies comes an alien force bent on smashing everything and killing everyone – goals which are not conducive to a happy existence for us earthlings. Something has to be done by someone. And that

Lemme back on the chopper!

Peeing against the wall is strictly forbidden.



INTERACTIVE
CONTENT: PLAY
THE VIDEO



> Blacksite continued

someone is you (no surprise there).

That's provided you can take the heat, of course. After all, Blacksite is not for the squeamish, with a graphical intensity that fleshes out the hideous monsters you encounter. ...

As explosions shake the towns that you are saving from this flesh-slashing menace, the camera shakes too. Particle effects (stay awake – this is not a physics lesson) fill the screen with post-bang smoke penetrated by alien laser fire to conjure a confusing and compelling battle environment.

Luckily, a squad of troops have got your ass and can step in when your eyes are stinging and your senses get knocked off kilter by the noise and intensity of the fight.

Don't expect these guys to do the job for you, mind. They're hanging on your every word and will respond to your good leadership by battling to the death in the face of the most terrifying foes. Lead them badly, however, and their morale will drop like a gibbering enemy who's been capped with a headshot, causing them to waver and fight less effectively.

To guarantee a sense of camaraderie, you can always play Blacksite online. Expect the usual raft of modes from Capture the Flag, to Team Deathmatch and a Siege effort where you attempt to

capture your opponents' base.

And yes, traitors to the human race, you'll be pleased to learn you'll also inhabit the fetid flesh of the Reborn, the alien creatures who don't like men, women, or even children. The horrors.

Encounters between the game's factions promise to be a fluid mix of tactics and all-out blasting. Squad dynamics are crucial, as is using the cover that's littered around each level, but almost entirely destructible scenery means brute force is always an option.

The controls are straightforward too: instructing your comrades to leap into a nearby tank, or plant enough C-4 to take out half of Wales is a one-button affair and shouldn't detract from the business of blasting all that moves.

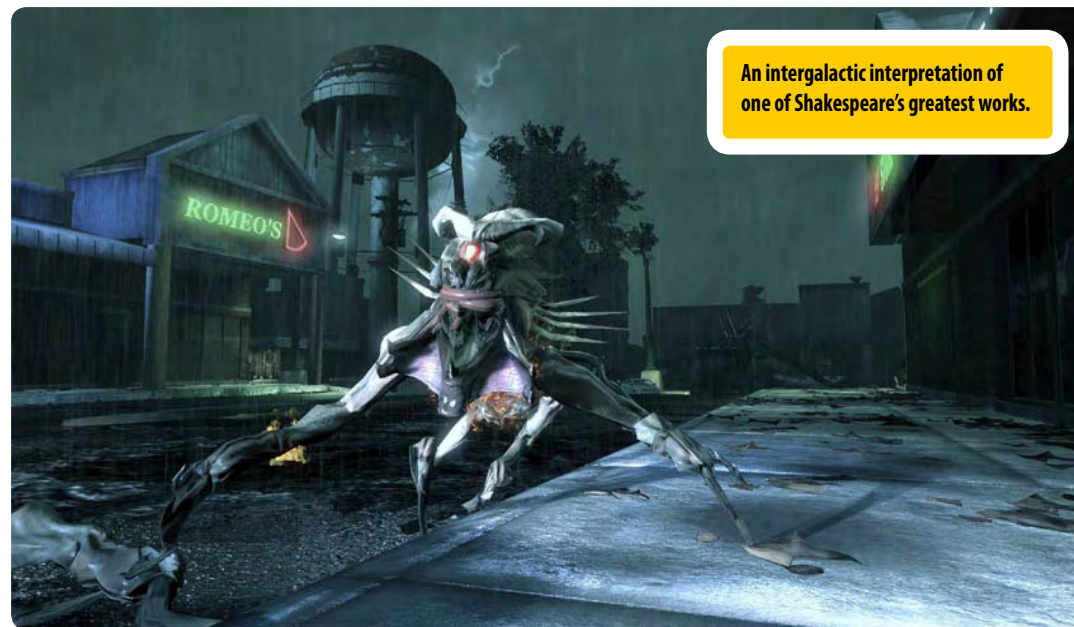
That's right – while Blacksite has all the trappings of a modern kill-fest, it is at heart a good, meaty shooter.

With lead flying everywhere, rumbling noise and intense firefights on the menu, this is a shooter for grown-ups who only stop blasting when their trigger finger falls off, or they die. We prefer the former. ●

Someone got temporary tattoos for his birthday.

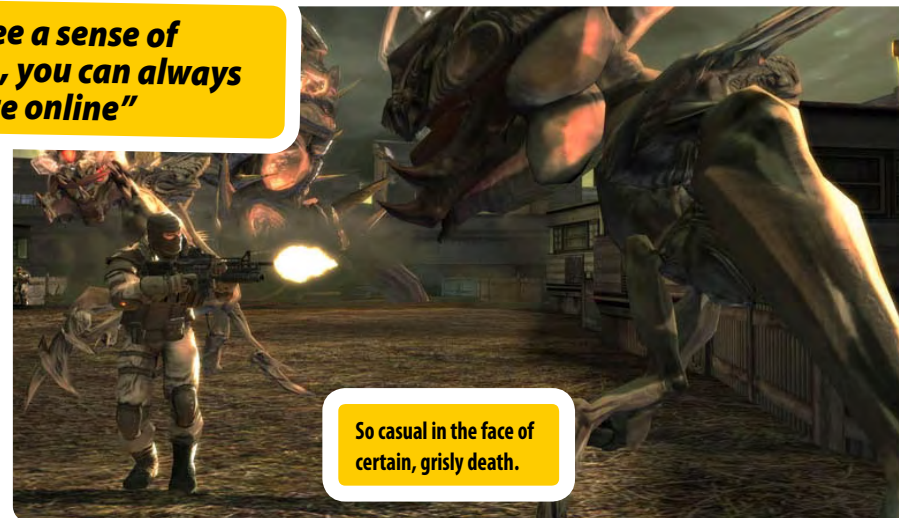


The welders of the future are on odd breed.



An intergalactic interpretation of one of Shakespeare's greatest works.

"To guarantee a sense of camaraderie, you can always play Blacksite online"



So casual in the face of certain, grisly death.

360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

70%

80%

Already polished squad blast with shoot for brains

PCGZine

MASSIVE PREVIEWS

Lord of the Rings Online

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. | Vanguard

MASSIVE REVIEWS

Maelstrom | Armed Assault

World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

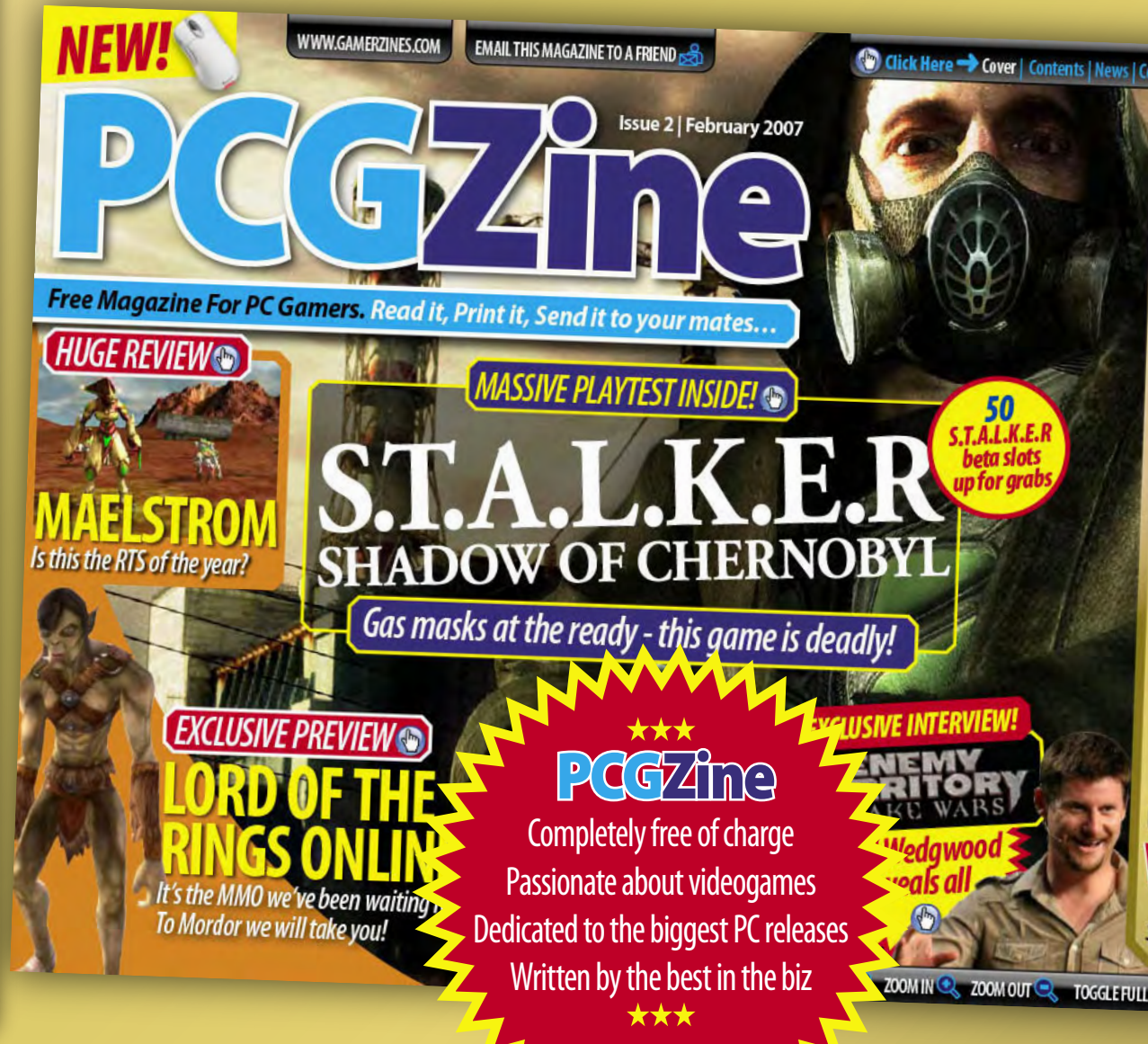
Paul 'locki' Wedgewood talks
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

ISSUE 3 OF PCGZINE

COMING FEBRUARY 28TH

Don't miss out! Sign up today at
www.gamerzines.com and we'll mail
you when it's published.

PCGamesZine DOWNLOAD NOW!



Crackdown

The war on crime will be fought on 360...

Here it is then, the long-awaited 'comeback' game from the creator of the original Grand Theft Auto. And while that fact has given the marketing people something to bang on about, it has led to an unfair level of expectation, further fuelled by claims that this is the first ever truly freeform three-dimensional game.

Unlike the slew of GTA rip-offs, for once you're on the side of the good

guys. You're not a 'gangsta', a 'balla', a 'rolla' or a 'robbing shit' - in Crackdown, you are the law. A far cry from the plodding bobbies of The Bill, however, you are an elite agent, part of a controversial human-modification program, no less. Better, faster, stronger than your average cop, you are effectively a superhero, able to leap from building to building meting out justice in the name of The Agency.

"You're not a 'gangsta', a 'balla', a 'rolla' or a 'robbing shit' - in Crackdown, you are the law"

This area is run by the Latin-Americans.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!
Click here to read the 360Zine interview now.

Girls can be gang bosses too.

YOU GOT SKILLS!

Time to get jumping & pumping



Agility

Leave the car at home and leap over tall building, like Spiderman without the sticky emissions. Improve agility by collecting orbs and competing in rooftop races.



Driving

The more you drive, the better you get. Improve your skills further by competing in checkpoint races and performing improbable stunts.



Explosives

A piffling grenade doesn't do much to start with but once your explosive skills are up to scratch, you'll be barbecuing gangsters like a pro.



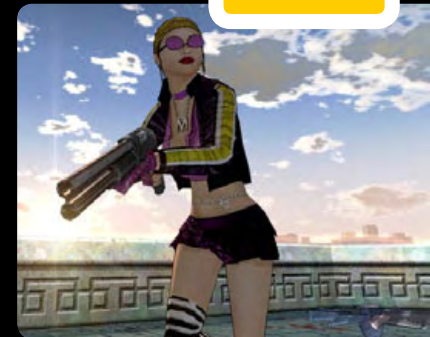
Strength

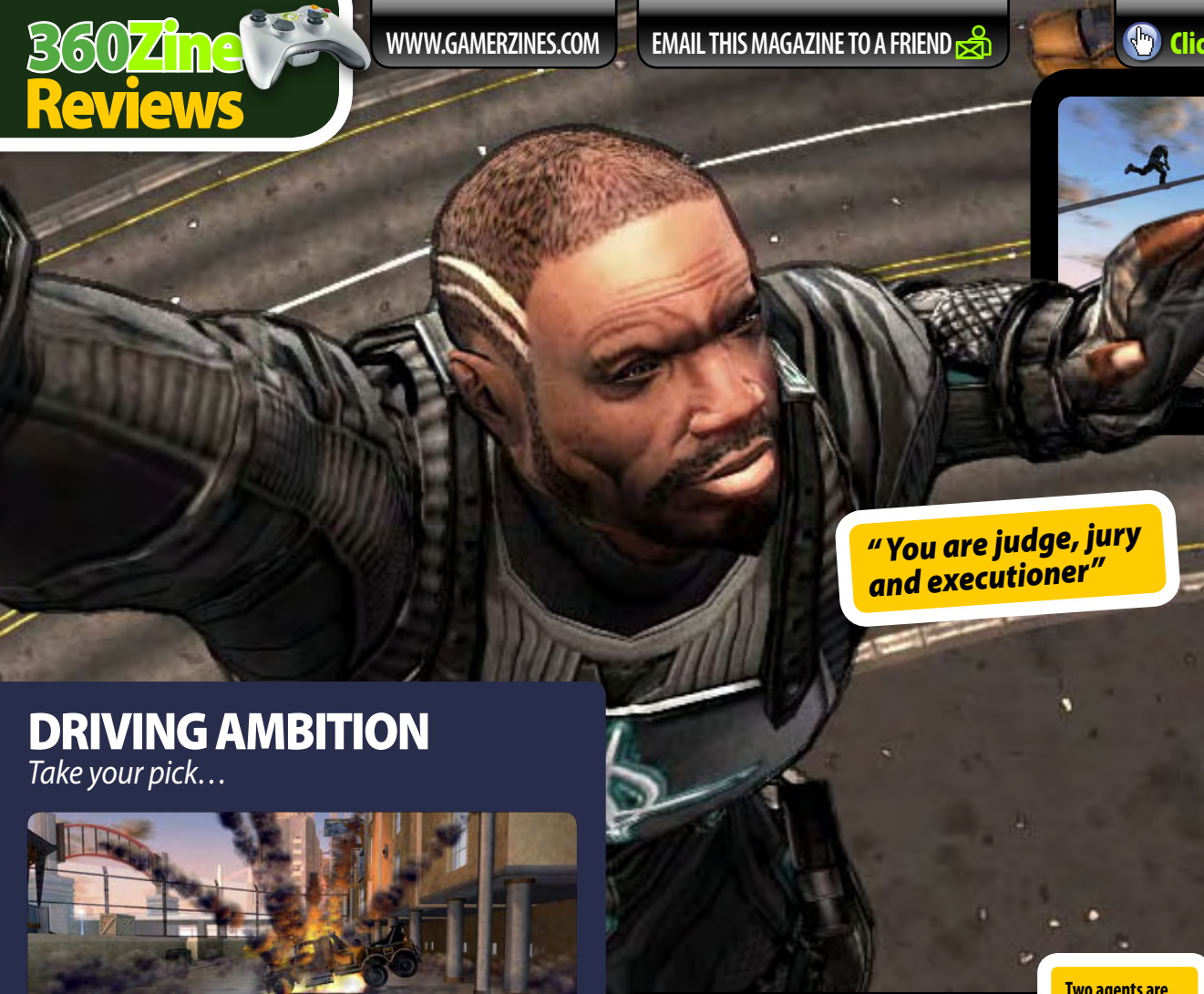
Chuckling the odd box around is for ten stone weaklings. Get some practice in and you'll eventually be able chuck cars around like Frisbees, and kick people to death.



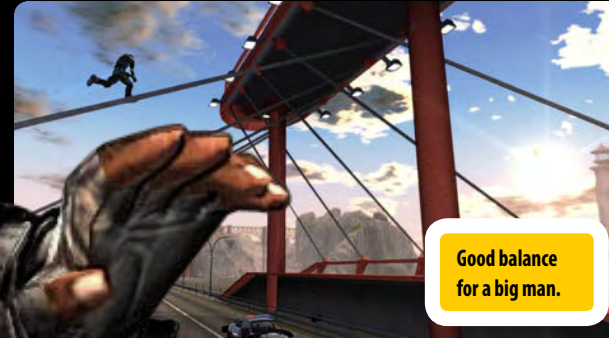
Weapons

The more you shoot, the better you get. Advance to the later stages and you'll be able to pick out a gangster from 100 yards, and even shoot cars off the road.





"You are judge, jury and executioner"



Good balance for a big man.

However, should you choose to, you can simply make an audacious assault on the main kingpin from the word go. Your chances of taking him down are about 5%, as calculated for you by the agency, but no doubt some numpties will be posting their efforts on YouTube as soon as the game is out.

No goblins

Realistically, you have to do it by the book, building up your skills until you are ready to take on the bosses. Structurally at least, Crackdown works like a roleplaying game, with your agent effectively levelling up in five key areas. Experience speeds up the process, so shooting criminals improves your shooting, and driving improves your driving – with a series of bespoke checkpoint races boosting it further. You start with a choice of three different agency vehicles, which actually physically transform in line with your driving skills. Once you've broken or lost your agency vehicle,

> Crackdown continued

With a nod to Judge Dredd, that justice comes in the form of violent death, as you are judge, jury and executioner.

Thankfully the criminals of Pacific City are easily recognisable, divided into three separate gangs. Each gang has seven bosses – including a kingpin – all three of whom must be wiped out to restore peace to the city. The sensible approach is to take out the underlings first, thus weakening the top dog in preparation for a final assault.



DRIVING AMBITION

Take your pick...



1. Supercar



2. SUV



3. Truck cab



1. Supercar

A stylish 2-seater sports car, the Agency Supercar combines looks with performance, packing a powerful punch and an impressive top speed. A wedge-shaped affair, this enables you to drive under any obstacle and scoop other vehicles into the air.

Two agents are better than one.



If in doubt, run away.



> Crackdown continued

you can of course commandeer any motor of your choice by dragging the hapless driver onto the road and making off with their pride and joy in the name of the greater good.

As for the city, it really is a sprawling 3D space, with countless roads going over and under each other, to the extent that the 2D map is largely useless. The ability to scale the buildings and leap around the rooftops really does open the game up, elevating it from a mere driving game into a genuine virtual space, although there is so much freedom that it sometimes feels like you've broken the game. Graphically, for all the talk of a unique visual style, at times it looks like an Xbox title, which of course it originally was. Photo-realism shouldn't necessarily be the sole aspiration though, and it works well enough with the comic book style.

Dick around

The lack of enforced structure means that you can simply dick around for hours, killing gangsters, performing stunts and gradually improving your agent for when you want to tackle some of the bosses. The organic nature of the levelling up means that you will inevitably become good at the aspects of the game that you enjoy. And should you need help in an area that you're week at you can draft in a suitably

skilled agent from Xbox Live to help you out in co-op mode.

Combat isn't subtle but it is effective – you're rarely more than 12 foot from an exploding barrel. There is a rudimentary sniper mode, but this is about as far removed from a Tom Clancy game as you could imagine. Although it doesn't really get going until your agent has picked up some skills, it's hard not to enjoy such a wantonly over the top experience. A gleefully anarchic romp, if you can't see the value in picking up a car full of gangsters, throwing it in the air and shooting the petrol cap, then we suggest you look elsewhere. ●

Steve Hill

"The ability to scale the buildings and leap around the rooftops opens the game up"



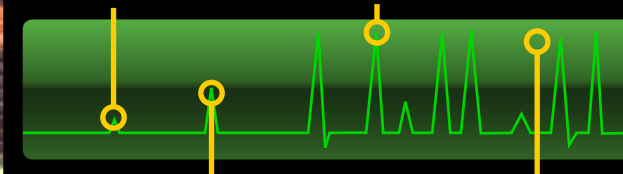
Your agent can even swim...

READER REVIEWS!
Agree with us?
Disagree?
[Click here to tell us now!](#)

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

First couple of hours don't really do it justice.

The simple joy of throwing your first car.



Wipe out the first gang and gain some serious skills.

You're a superhero!



Excuse me, I need to borrow your car.

Hang round the docks and do favours for sailors.



360Zine Verdict *A relentless orgy of explosions and death. But of bad guys for a change.*

- 👍 Absurdly over the top action
- 👍 A virtual playground
- 👎 The odd glitch and so-so graphics

88%



Publisher: Koei

Developer: Omega
ForceHeritage: Dynasty
Warriors, Samurai
Warriors

Link: www.koei.com

ETA: 16/3/2007

Samurai Warriors 2: Empires

Turning Japanese, one fief at a time.

Based in feudal Japan, Samurai Warriors 2: Empires is a spin-off of last year's non-event, Samurai Warriors 2, which was also a spin-off from the long running, and incredibly popular Dynasty Warriors franchise. While many were quick to criticise SW2 for being too simplistic, and lacking in depth, SW2: Empires looks to rectify this by adding a surprisingly complex "Strategy" phase to the proceedings, taking the basic Dynasty Warriors framework, and turning it on its head.

The main part of the game is the

Scenario mode, which lets you play through several periods of historical warfare, which took place in feudal Japan. Presenting you a map of Japan, you first have to choose a "fief" you want to command and control, which is basically a chunk of Japan to call your own. Once you've done that, it's up to you to run your fief as if it were a real city, keeping its inhabitants happy, recruiting new soldiers to your armies, as well as working the land to the best of its potential, and reaping the rewards. Strangely enough, this is all

"Choose a chunk of Japan to call your own"



All weapons are upgradable as you go through the game.

Combat with enemy officers can prove to be challenging.

FREEZE FRAME
Prepare for battle



Choosing a formation before battle can give you an important advantage over your enemies.



Survey the map to work out the quickest and most efficient way to get to the enemy base.



When you're on the battlefield, watch out for enemy officers. They carry sharper swords than most.



When things start to go wrong, your teammates will send reinforcements to wherever they're needed.



Level up - kill enough enemies, and gain enough experience, and you'll grow every bit stronger.



Fancy HD FMV cutscenes break up the action.





RIGHT FOR YOUR FIGHT

Put yourself into the midst of war.



1 Brilliantly, Samurai Warriors 2 lets you create your own warrior, and send him into the battlefield to do your bidding. How will your creation affect the tide of war?



2 Unfortunately, there aren't too many options to choose from, as the models are all standard, leaving you only able to customise the colour, and very little else. Boo!



3 Still, when you've finished your creation, he can fight alongside you, or even against you in the war. It's time to unleash hell!

> Samurai Warriors

done through collecting cards. While this may sound a little wacky, in practice, it actually makes things a lot easier, helping to simplify what would otherwise be a convoluted series of menus. In each strategic phase, you're given a number of turns, which increases with the amount of fiefs you command. During each turn, you can choose to either go to one of your officers, and see which cards they advise playing, delegate the responsibility of your fief to someone

else, or use the decree option to give yourself full control over what's happening. For the first few turns, you'll have to consult your officers, as you have very few cards of your own to choose from. Upon doing this, each officer will offer you two cards, and you have to pick the officer whose cards best suit whatever it is you want to do. Each card has a unique action, from simple things, such as listening to the residents of your village (which increases their happiness), to self-serving commands, like ordering your villagers to mine for gold. There are



If you, and four allied officers have a full musou gauge, you can unleash a super attack.

"Samurai Warriors 2 lets you create your own warrior"

2 Player co-op can often help even the odds when your back's against the wall.

Glowing swords = massive damage.

> Samurai Warriors

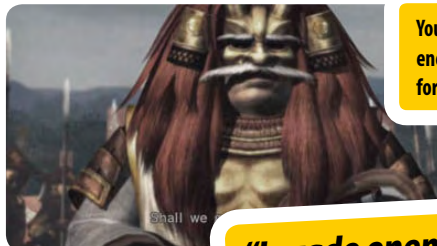
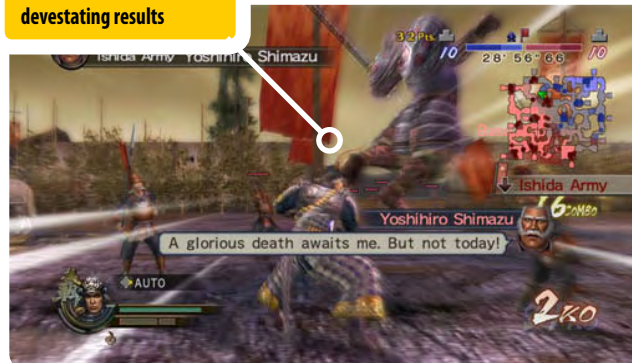
even "Tactic" cards, which allow you to deploy certain formations in the battle mode, giving your soldiers a statistical boost over your enemies.

Stop! Fief!

Each of the officers in your command has a certain number of soldiers under their instruction, so it's important that you position the right officers in the right places to deal with the right threats from your surrounding fiefs. Leave a fief with just one officer, who has 100 troops, and it's likely you'll be slaughtered – a lot of forward planning is required here, and you'll need to present a unified front if you want to keep control of your land.

If you choose to invade enemy territory, or get invaded yourself, the action switches to battle mode, letting you control exactly what's going happening on the field. What you're presented with is basically your standard Dynasty Warriors type battle – you and your officers, versus thousands of enemies. However, once again, this time it's a lot more strategic than before. As has traditionally been the case, you and your men must attempt to slay the enemy officers, and make your way towards the enemy general. This is done by capturing bases, and forming an unbroken line of command from your base, straight to the enemy HQ; an accomplishment to achieve, and a strategic objective that adds a substantial amount of depth to

Focusing your energy into a Musou attack can have devastating results



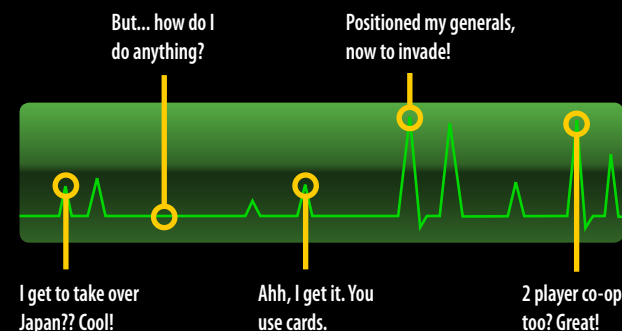
"Invade enemy territory the action switches to battle mode"

the otherwise monotonous gameplay.

Quite simply, this is exactly what the Samurai Warriors series needed – something to give it a bit more variety outside of simple button mashing. The strategic phase adds a whole new level of depth, with the upshot that suddenly everything doesn't seem quite so stale – even the battles feel fresh. Building on the previous title's graphics and sound, and taking its gameplay to a whole new level, Samurai Warriors 2: Empires is an accomplished follow-up from the land of the rising sun. ●

Ian Morris

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



Disappointingly, taking an enemy base just involves killing the commanders.

360Zine Verdict *Samurais, swords and strategy – the perfect combination.*

- 👍 The "strategy" phase is great
- 👍 Breathes new life into the battles
- 👎 Slightly monotonous gameplay

81%



Two swords, and a horse at the same time. Now that's impressive.



Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Eidos Hungary

Heritage: None

Link: www.battlestations.net
OUT NOW

Battlestations: Midway

"You sank my battleship!"

A few decades ago, a mainstay of any game-oriented upbringing was a pen and paper game of Battleships. Fast-forward to today and you can play out the entire Pearl Harbour aftermath on your high-definition TV. Battlestations Midway has been kicking around for years in various guises before finally rocking up on the Xbox 360.

In fairness, it's scrubbed up reasonably well, with some nice details

such as tiny crewmembers strolling around the deck in the heat of battle. If we're being picky, the sea - which features heavily - looks a bit plastic. Like a swimming pool with a protective sheet over it; you're almost tempted to try to walk on it.

That of course would be foolish, as you have a key period of World War II to contest. Loosely based around the Battle Of Midway, the shoehorned storyline follows a young recruit

Excellent camouflage, for a jungle.

More dog-fighting than the East End.

The sea is slightly plastic fantastic.

"It's scrubbed up reasonably well, with some nice details"

climbing the slippery pole to the upper echelons of naval command. Relayed via a series of hammy cut scenes, it's largely an irrelevance, as you don't really play as one person, instead constantly switching between each vehicle under your command.

An odd mix of gameplay styles, there is a vague strategy element whereby you consult a map and order a few ships about, but it would be stretching the point to describe it as a real time strategy game. It's basically



Why did kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

> Battlestations continued

an action game in which the action continues whether you're there or not.

Das Boat

Kicking off with the attack on Pearl Harbour, the main US Campaign sees you take on missions of varying degrees of quality and historical accuracy, involving some combination of planes, ships and submarines. The flying model is fairly sound, and the dog-fighting is practically identical to that of other bespoke flight games. Where it gets interesting is with the dive-bombing or aerial torpedoes: swooping in on an enemy vessel, dropping your payload and accelerating out of the smoke is undeniably exciting.

As for commandeering a battleship, it's a change of pace, and the sheer firepower at your disposal makes for some explosive action. And lastly, submarines feature only intermittently,

a blessed relief as controlling one is at least as dull as it sounds.

While the game occasionally feels half-baked, there is definitely some entertainment to be had, and in the midst of a ferocious sea battle it can take on epic proportions. Keeping tabs on your planes, ships, and submarines can be something of a plate-spinning exercise, and it's a payoff between getting the strategy right and getting hands-on for some precision strikes. Essentially you take the role of a glory-hunter, taking the helm for glamour jobs such as a bombing run, and then relinquishing control to the AI when the planes need to fly back to reload.

With some missions clocking in at half an hour or more, it does become mildly engrossing, albeit something of a pisser when you have to start again because your aircraft carrier has sunk. It's all over pretty quickly though, with little more than a couple of days' play. ●

Steve Hill



"The sheer firepower at your disposal makes for some explosive action"

Now get the hell out of there.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

It's a beautiful day at Pearl Harbour... Did we mention submarines are dull?

Laborious and time consuming tutorials Separate missions let you play as the Japanese



Good shot sir!

Take a break from the battle to take in the sunset.

THREE OF A KIND

Air, sea and sea.



1. Ship



2. Plane



3. Sub



1. Ship

Use the rudimentary repair system to keep your battleships afloat or they'll end up like this.

360Zine Verdict Gives you that sinking feeling. But, in a good way.

Engrossing

Original

Short

80%

Fuzion Frenzy 2

The Non-Mario Party Returns

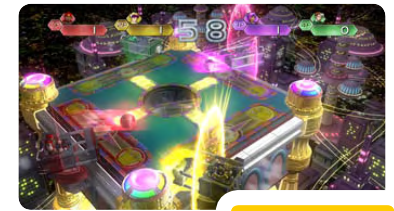
Sharp, shiny, and full of mini-game goodness, Fuzion Frenzy 2 is a welcome addition to the Xbox 360 line-up. The first Frenzy game was a decent mini-game fiesta for the Xbox, and one of the very few games of its ilk to hit the system at all. Fuzion Frenzy 2 stands alone in the 360's roster and similarly entertains thanks to a large sampling of solid, simple four-player games and exceptional online support.

Like most party games, Fuzion Frenzy 2 is appealing largely because it delivers on the promise of easy multiplayer gaming for anyone—no matter their skill level. Unfortunately, despite the fact that Mario Party developer Hudson Soft developed Fuzion Frenzy 2, they didn't do quite as good a job this time around. The set-up for the main game is particularly bad.

Based around an intergalactic game show, the tournament mode's set-up is spectacularly annoying and burdened by one of the most irritating digital hosts ever created. The jerky motions and the disturbingly fake look of Frenzy's bizarre host will make most players want to skip through his tedious segments as quickly as possible. Thankfully, the rest of the game fares much better.

Mini-games

Although the game comes from the same place as Nintendo's Mario-fest, Fuzion Frenzy 2 certainly isn't a clone. Stripped of the board game elements, Fuzion Frenzy 2 is a much purer form of mini-game love. In the tournament mode, the object is to win between two and five of the seven different



Large spinning balls of death play a large role

"Fuzion Frenzy 2 delivers on the promise of easy multiplayer gaming for anyone"

FREEZE FRAME
Mini-games made easy



The computer fills up any gaps in the four-way roster during multiplayer.



Beat a game, and you'll get to choose the next round.



Beat a world, and you'll get to choose the next planet!



Losers can butt in too, if they have a select next round card.



Fuzion Frenzy 2 offers some pretty easy to achieve achievement points.



> Fuzion Frenzy 2 continued



CARD CAPTURES

Learn how to play your cards right...



1. Catch Cards

2. Face Off

3. Use Them

1. Catch Cards

A couple of times per planet, you'll get a chance to catch some new cards.

planets. Aside from Earth, there is a casino world, a mechanical world, and elemental planets that revolve around ice, water, and lava, each divided into a variety of mini-games.

Button mashing

There are over 40 different games, and fans of the original Fuzion Frenzy will find plenty of nostalgia. Many of the battles still focus on large spinning balls, hopping robots, hitting people with hammers, and other bits of button-mashing fun. Controls are kept simple, so while casual gamers will be able to jump right in, hardcore gamers could become easily bored.

Bizarre hosts aside, the graphics are otherwise decent, although you wouldn't hold them up as a shining example of next-gen loveliness - there's nothing here that's too far removed from a good original Xbox game. Where the game shines is in the variety of locales. Each mini-game is full of graphics panache and special effects that reflect the theme of the planet it's on. The audio is less inspired, with painful voice acting, forgettable music, and passable sound effects.

Party on

Of course, the single player tournament is merely practice fodder for the multiplayer battles. There are a variety of game options ranging from full-on tournaments to specific mini-games for players on the same

machine and across Xbox Live. As the first real step to online party gaming for the Xbox 360, this is a significant reason to dig in.

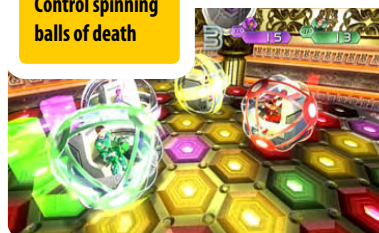
Lonely single players won't find much use for Fuzion Frenzy 2, but fans of casual, easily grasped multiplayer games will love it. The inclusion of Xbox Live support means you never have to wait for chums to show up. Plus, if you can get past the awful game show host, there is enough mini-game action here to entertain you and three others for quite some time.

Jason D'Aprile

"The first real step to online party gaming for the Xbox 360"



Control spinning balls of death



PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



Simon Says... prepare to die

360Zine Verdict

Not quite up to Mario standards, but fun anyway.



Plenty of games



Simplistic for most experienced gamers



Can't opt for smaller than four-player

72%



Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

Drive a tank, pop pills and arrange coloured blocks on this month's Arcade

Heavy Weapon: Atomic Tank

Developer: CTXm SIA

Publisher: PopCap Games

Cost: 800 MP (~£6.80)

A frantic side-on shooter, Heavy Weapon : Atomic Tank is one of the simpler games we've seen on XBLA, but it's certainly no worse off for it. As you trundle through the levels, the skies quickly fill up as hundreds of enemies fly overhead, and it's up to you to shoot the planes out the sky, whilst dodging their deadly payload, and edging ever nearer to the end of the level. Each level ends with a battle against a massive mechanised boss, and brilliantly, at any time, you can enlist a friend to join you and help wage war against the enemy.



- Co-Op is fantastic.
- Great "Old-school" soundtrack
- Can get slightly monotonous

Spectankular.

81%

Ms. Pac-Man

Developer: Namco Bandai Games Inc.

Publisher: Namco Bandai Games Inc.

Cost: 400 MP (~£3.40)

Do we really need another Pac-Man game on the Arcade? The unofficial sequel to 1979's Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man was originally published by Midway in 1981, and went on to become the best selling arcade machine of its day. Differing only slightly from the original game, Ms.Pac-Man began life as a bootleg hack of the original Pac-Man arcade board that featured filled-in walls, faster gameplay, better enemy AI and a few extra warp tunnels. While these changes do improve the gameplay slightly, it's still the same game we played years ago, and only a slightly modified version of the game that's been available on the marketplace for months.



- Good if you've never played Pac-Man
- We've been here before.
- It's Pac-Man. Again.

Should be sent Pac-ing. Seriously.

42%

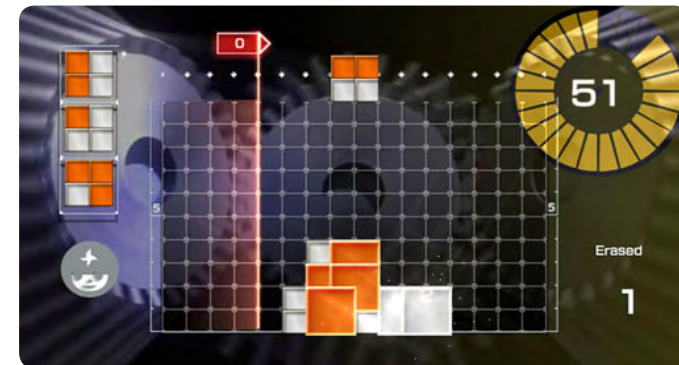
Lumines Live Downloadable Content

Developer: Q Entertainment Inc

Publisher: Q Entertainment Inc

Cost: Varies, 200MP (~£1.70) til Feb 21st, then 750 MP (~£6.37)

The long awaited Lumines Live downloadable content finally hit the marketplace this month, and after the initial furore over pricing, each pack has been granted a hefty discount. The Puzzle/Mission pack adds over 100 brain-teasing challenges to the game, and is a good buy for 100/300 MP. However, be aware that if you haven't finished the original puzzles/missions from the base mode, the majority of new challenges will be locked, preventing you from playing them. The pick of the bunch is a new skin called Heavenly Star.



- Heavenly Star is a great tune
- Great value while they're cheap
- Paid content? Locked?!

Discount Heaven

71%



> Inbox

Keeep your emails coming. It's great to get your feedback on the issue and your thoughts on all that's hot (and not) in the world of Xbox 360. Disagree with our Crackdown review? Let me know. Have strong feelings about PlayStation3 - we wanna hear 'em. Whatever it is you want to say, simply email me at 360zine@gamerzines.com or click on the Reader Feedback button to the right to use the built-in form. (And as always... if you like what we're doing don't forget to tell all your mates about www.gamerzines.com).

Cheers,
Dan

Don't miss Issue 4
Out March 13th
Sign up now!



WOW! WHAT CAN I SAY, WHEN I WAS A bit younger I used to read my magazines and comics and dream that in some areas they would spring into real life action. Well, you have given me my dream. Thanks very much... keep it up.

> C.Gardiner

> Crikey. Delivering dreams can be a tall order, but we'll take the praise all the same.

THIS IS FANTASTIC. WELL WRITTEN AND the layout is excellent. The feature links are also an excellent idea. Well done and keep up the good work.

> Simon

I WAS SEARCHING FOR FABLE 2 INFO and found your magazine. I am truly impressed. I was surprised that a free magazine would be this good. The multimedia and ads are brilliant, and your reviews are in-depth. Keep it up.

> Daniyal Harris

> Thanks Daniyal. Free is the name of the game online, but that doesn't have to get in the way of great content. We pride ourselves on using the best games journalists out there to always deliver in-depth no-nonsense reviews.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE SET the bar by which all other emagazines should be compared!

Beautifully designed, superb content, easy to read - and that's coming from someone who really doesn't like reading publications

online. Keep up the excellent work!

> Sparc

> Glad to see we've managed to convert you Sparc. But don't forget, if do want to read us offline you can print off 360Zine in hi-res to get a magazine quality hardcopy from your home (or office) printer.

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING SUCH A fresh idea and taking the time to revitalize the video gaming magazine. I found you guys through Major Nelson's blog page. Keep up the good work I look forward to more of your issues.

> Vincent Cordero

> Thanks Vincent. Yep, a few readers came to issue 2 courtesy of Major Nelson. So, allow us to take this opportunity to thank Major Nelson for flagging us up on his blog and sending you in our direction. And don't miss this month's interview on page 30.

YOU ARE DOING A *HELL YEAH* good job, my congratulations! This is exactly what I was looking for - an almost futuristic magazine for a gamer like me. It's a real pleasure to read your stuff on 32" HD TV. Keep up the good work, I can't wait for a next issue!

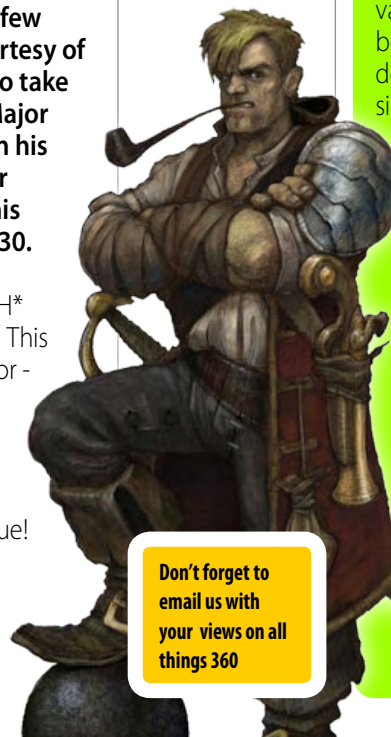
> Mr. Herring

> Fire us up on your living room TV. Good thinking Mr. Herring!



Missed a back issue?
Download it for free
and forever from
www.gamerzines.com

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think!



Don't forget to email us with your views on all things 360

FABLE 2: MOST WANTED

Last month we asked what you'd like to see in Fable 2...

I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO MAP MY face on to a character.

> Ruben

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE FABLE 2 LIVE up to and surpass all expectations, but it seems as though the developers have set themselves a near impossible task.

> Tim

CO-OP PLAY WOULD BE COOL, continued support via downloadable content, a more varied cinematic combat system, a better stealth system, larger more dense environments with simulated creatures, and the ability to climb and move objects.

> Nick (Viper) Miller

IT WOULD BE GREAT IF YOU could be an assassin, like stalk someone through the forest waiting for the right time to strike, climb up the trees and hide in the branches, then jump down, and kill whatever you were paid to kill or you just want to kill for fun.

> Darren Logan

We say: "We'd like drop-in co-op for single player like Gears of War and face mapping too."

Meet Microsoft's Major Nelson

James Woodcock chats with Larry Hryb, Microsoft's Xbox Live Director of Programming

If you're searching for cutting-edge Xbox 360 information, the name Major Nelson should be at the top of your list to deliver the inside track on all aspects of the console. Larry Hryb (Gamertag: Major Nelson) whose day job is Xbox Live Director of Programming at Microsoft, has gained the respect of many gamers with his unique presentation style and openness, using blogcasts and posts on his personal site www.majornelson.com. We took the opportunity to chat with Larry about all aspects of his work and his involvement with Xbox Live. You can read some highlights here, or listen to the complete interview (see right).

Describe your typical day as the Director of Programming for Xbox Live?

Well, the typical day is that there is no typical day. I come into work and sit on the product team; I don't work in marketing or public relations. I'm actually sitting here with the guys and the girls that are writing the code for Xbox Live. Part of my job is to communicate with them the desires of

the community, what it is looking for and help work on future features for Xbox Live.

What did you learn from the original Xbox Live service that has transformed onto the Xbox 360?

We learned that gamers always wanted to stay connected. When you were playing a game on the original Xbox that had no Live component, you felt isolated. So we had to make the online service be always connected, always online, so people could always get in touch with you and you could always reach out from your living room. That was really important.

Is Microsoft's ability to deliver such a robust service like Xbox Live born out of the Windows and PC heritage?

Well obviously the whole backend of the service is Windows based. I think that is one way of looking at it. We had a lot of people that came over from the Windows and Xbox team many years ago, but more importantly most people on this team are gamers. They know what gamers want as they are gamers themselves. So they really wanted to deliver a service that they were proud of and that they would use as well.

Would you consider Xbox Live the major selling point for the Xbox 360 with it being such a core component now?

"Moving forward we are probably going to see an A- to a solid A in the quality of Xbox Live Arcade content"



Meet Larry Hryb,
AKA Microsoft's
Major Nelson

LISTEN TO THE WHOLE INTERVIEW NOW!
Want to hear all of what the Major had to say? The full interview is 16 minutes long, so you can click here to start the interview playing, then continue to browse the rest of the magazine while it plays if you want. Audio controls will appear and remain on this page to allow you to pause, stop, rewind, etc. Click here now to play!





> Major Nelson continued

I think there are many selling points and obviously Live is part of that and let's be clear, earlier we announced we sold over ten million units. So there are still five more million people out there at this point that don't have Xbox Live, we would love to get them on and that number continues to grow every day. The Live connectivity is really part of the entire universe of the Xbox 360. The other part is the games. The titles we have coming out are simply phenomenal. If you look at all the titles that came over the past 6-8 months, it is really staggering. The other component is your media, how you can just walk up and plug your iPod or Zune in and it just works. How you can connect it to your Windows Media PC and make the Xbox 360 one of the best extending experiences, so it is really all these elements.

Do you think Xbox Live has forced console competitors to take online gaming more seriously in this new generation?

I would hope so, being a console in this day and age that's not connected is not acceptable, and we saw that in what Sony and even Nintendo have done. Let's talk about Sony for a second: they stood up and said Xbox Live is this, this and this and we can do that. Well, certainly Sony can but they didn't, so that is the reality! What we have done over the years is create this robust

service and continue to invest and keep pushing forward.

Is there any concern that the Sony PlayStation online service is free? Do you think this will be an issue for you?

Well sure, never underestimate your competitors and Sony is a fantastic company. We are just going to keep watching and seeing what they do, but in the mean time we are going to continue to innovate.

Xbox Live Arcade has really had its ups and downs with regard to how much content has been released. How would you like to see this progress over the next few months?

I think for the past 6-8 months, I would give us a B to B+ in terms of what we have done there. Moving forward we are probably going to see an A- to a solid A in the quality of content. We just announced recently ten titles starting from February and beyond that we are going to see a lot of exciting, new and original titles as well as some of the classics. I think we are just picking up speed now that developers are starting to understand what the Arcade is all about.

What sort of updates can we expect for Xbox Live in the near future?

We have stated that updates are planned twice a year, historically the

spring update is one where there is a lot of dashboard features and the fall update tends to be backend items. We are sticking with that, we haven't announced any new features yet, but I have seen some really exciting stuff.

What is the one feature you would like to see on Xbox Live?

One of the things I am pushing for is the ability for people to listen to and look at their picture attachments on Xbox.com. Xbox.com is an important extension of the Xbox Live experience. I think we would all like that.

So, what's the inside information on Halo 3?

There is nothing I can say about it without risking my life, limb and pursuit of happiness. The Bungie guys are hard at work and I basically find out news just as everyone else does by looking at Bungie.net.

What about how Rainbow Six Vegas allows you to map your face into the game with the Xbox Live Vision Camera?

Isn't that wild?! I look forward to seeing what some of the developers are going to do with that unit, because that is just brilliant. We'd love to see it unlocked in new and exciting ways.

Halo 3. Larry claims he hasn't seen it. Yeah, right.

Map your face into the game with RS6 Vegas

READER REQUESTS!
Click here to tell us what feature you'd like to see on Xbox Live! We'll print the best ideas next month and pass them on to Larry!

HD War

HD-DVD and Blu-Ray prepare for a global showdown

Whether you're a devoted Xbox 360 gamer, or you're planning to hook up a shiny new PlayStation 3 as soon as it hits our shores, lucky owners of HDTV-compatible consoles now have more than just gorgeous games to gaze in awe at. The next format war won't just be about videogames, but video itself—HD-DVD versus Blu-Ray.

Although both HD-DVD and Blu-Ray have had about a year to battle in the marketplace, selecting one over the other is hardly simple. If you're a diehard Xbox 360 gamer, then the decision is significantly easier—buy the add-on HD-DVD drive and load up on movies. Either console, as it turns out, makes a fantastic high definition movie player—better in many cases than the far more expensive standalone players.

Blu-Ray definitely has more corporate support. Toshiba and Microsoft primarily back HD-DVD; while Blu-Ray has the combined marketing might of Sony, Panasonic, Philips, Samsung, HP, and others. The

biggest uphill battle for the HD-DVD format is support from the major US movie giants. Disney, Sony Pictures/Columbia, and 20th Century Fox are currently only backing Blu-Ray. Although Warner issues content in both formats, it has been heavily supportive of HD-DVD, and Universal, Paramount/Dreamworks, and HBO are onboard with HD-DVD content as well.

you'll actually care about? Both formats have hundreds of titles available now, but since Fox and Sony are Blu-Ray only, there are some significant gaps in the library for HD-DVD. While no one is likely to be crying foul over the lack of *Ultraviolet* or *Alien vs. Predator* for their Xbox 360, the non-availability of the *X-Men* movies or Disney releases could be a source of contention. That aside, the majority of releases still seem to be available on both formats, so while ➤

"Either console makes a fantastic high definition movie player"

So, what does this mean in terms of content

LISTEN UP

It's not just all good looks y'know

For most people, the size of the screen has always been the most important concern when it comes to playing videogames or watching movies, but for the true cinephile, the audio is equally as important. With the new HDTV movie formats, audio has taken another leap—loss-less, uncompressed audio. Currently, both Dolby Labs and DTS have their own proprietary loss-less audio formats. Yet another standard is a favourite on many Blu-Ray discs—PCM is uncompressed, loss-less 7.1 sound.

Unfortunately, these newest audio standards are only available via a HDMI 1.3 cable. Even more regrettably, the first generation of stand-alone Blu-Ray players don't support HDMI 1.3 cables, though the PlayStation 3 does. So far, no mass-market audio receivers support 1.3, so most home cinephiles rely on the standard optical cable and standard Dolby Digital/DTS 5.1 (or 6.1).

While waiting for the next wave of HD-capable audio receivers, take heart that the new HD movies do indeed sound better, with more clarity and attention to subtle audio detail. When the rest of your home theatre catches up, you may never feel the need to set foot in a local cinema again.

TOP HD-DVD TITLES

Watch 'em today on your Xbox 360



KING KONG
It comes with the drive for a reason. It looks and sounds amazing. Plus, it's easy to skip the dull scenes and watch the T-Rex fights over and over...



BATMAN BEGINS
Nothing tests a HDTV like its ability to reproduce deep blacks. The HD-DVD version makes the original DVD seem like low-grade VHS.



V FOR VENDETTA
Anarchy never looked so good. Although spots of grain abound, the sheer beauty and detail give this movie even greater impact.



SMALLVILLE SEASON 5
There aren't yet many HD TV shows available, so Warner Bros. did fans a favour releasing this sharp looking five-disc set.



SUPERMAN RETURNS
Watching the crisp action scenes, and detailed bustle of the Daily Planet on HD makes the movie feel like a comic book come to life.

> HD War continued

you might miss some of your favourites, there are plenty of other choices to comfort you. Also, with a few exceptions, HD-DVD movies are usually cheaper. Blu-Ray discs have the size advantage as well. Dual-layered Blu-Ray discs can hold 50 GB, while HD-DVD discs hold 30 GB. Nevertheless, actual picture quality differences are almost non-existent. In fact, HD-DVD movies often look slightly better, and in our tests, we found that overall, HD-DVD movies had less grain and slightly more depth to the picture, while the Blu-Ray movies tended to have noticeably richer and bolder colours.

Admittedly, this is nitpicking, since most of the movies, despite occasional

flaws, look incredible. So incredible that you might very well wish you hadn't wasted all that money on those low-resolution DVDs!

A universal issue is simply that flaws in the original film are magnified in high definition. Special effects short cuts appear especially obvious. Green screen usage becomes resoundingly apparent, since even the slightest flaw in shadows or lighting makes what once seemed amazing, now suffer as slightly annoying. The cartoonish *Ultraviolet* can get by with its clearly fake and rather low resolution attack helicopters, yet Peter Jackson's intense *King Kong* shows clearly that the actors are disconnected from the stampeding dinosaurs.

Overall, the Xbox 360 and these new HD-DVDs are the most impressive

"HD-DVDs are the most impressive signals you can feed your big screen"

signals you can feed your big screen HDTV. The one caveat to watching HD-DVDs through your Xbox 360 is the lack of HDMI output. Unlike the PS3, this means that you cannot get true 1080p support for movies unless you output the HD-DVD signal through the PC/VGA cable - but many TVs don't have VGA inputs. The lack of HDMI also means that the Xbox 360 HD-DVD player cannot support the new high definition loss-less audio formats (see boxout).

We can only hope that Microsoft (thus far silent on the topic) fixes this situation soon because, the Xbox 360 add-on is a brilliant introduction to the HD-DVD format! ●

Review

Xbox 360 HD-DVD drive

Stay at the cutting-edge with a simple add-on

Product Name:
Xbox 360 HD-DVD Drive
Manufacturer:
Microsoft
Link: www.xbox.com
Price: £129.99

Sega déjà vu aside, Microsoft did well with their HD-DVD unit. Aesthetically, it matches the Xbox 360 perfectly. Installation is relatively simple, although be prepared for the inevitable system upgrade before watching anything.

Once installed, the menu allows access to both drives, making movie watching a simple process. The Xbox 360 unit is also far faster than most stand-alone HD-DVD players. The aforementioned lack of HDMI support is the only significant caveat, though VGA output is an acceptable substitute if your TV supports it. Rest assured however, that component cables allow for 1080i and 720p performance that will impress the neighbours.

One notable feature of the Xbox 360 unit is the USB pass-through. Since you will want to plug the drive into the rear USB port of the Xbox 360, the HD-DVD drive comes with extra USB ports and a cradle area for the wireless network adaptor. The HD-DVD drive is now available with a deluxe remote and the King Kong movie. Reasonably priced, easy to operate, and offering stunning picture quality, the HD-DVD drive will finally offer you something to watch other than Gears of War. ●



Hi-Def video is here and ready to go. And all for £129.99

TOP BLU-RAY TITLES

Watch 'em tomorrow on the PS3



THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
The perfect test of your TV's ability to show off pristine whites. On Blu-Ray the picture quality is gorgeous all around.



KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
Available in the director's cut, this is a gorgeous historical battle movie, with some of the crispest imagery you're likely to see.



X-MEN: THE LAST STAND
The weakest of the X-Men movies gets the Blu-Ray treatment and despite some occasional grain it's otherwise superbly detailed.



OPEN SEASON
CGI should, as a rule, always look terrific in HD, and Open Season looks great. Exceptional details, vibrant colours, and excellent audio.



KUNG FU HUSTLE
The exceptional quality of this transfer is especially worthwhile in comparison to the mediocre Blu-Ray release of House of Flying Daggers.

360Zine Verdict The easiest and sharpest way to get aboard the Hi-Def bandwagon

- Easy Set-up
- Stunning picture quality
- A rather noisy movie player

90%

In **360Zine** Issue 4
IN-DEPTH REVIEW

Bullet Witch

Magic and mayhem awaits...

REVIEWS

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon
Advanced Warfighter 2
Virtua Tennis 3
Sensible World of Soccer
The Darkness

PREVIEWS

Mass Effect
BioShock



FREE!
Spread the word...
Don't forget to
mail your mates
our URL!

360Zine Issue 4 Out March 13th!

Don't miss it! Sign up today!



Cranberry Publishing Limited

www.cranberrypublishing.com

Publishing Director: Dave Taylor

Email: dave.taylor@cranberrypublishing.com

Editorial Director: Dan Hutchinson

Email: dan.hutchinson@cranberrypublishing.com

Commercial Director: Duncan Ferguson

Email: duncan.ferguson@cranberrypublishing.com

Telephone: 07770 648500

Call Duncan to discover how e-publications can work for you!

Design: InkCap Design

Contributors: Lee Hall, Steve Hill, Ian Morris, James Woodcock,
Jason D'Aprile

All rights reserved. This publication may be copied in its entirety without modification for non-commercial purposes, for example but not limited to copying to CD-R for a friend, but it may not be offered for download from any website or similar without the prior permission of the copyright holder. You are free to, and encouraged to, link to the original file for download from our website and you can find help on doing so here. While the greatest care is taken in producing this guide, we do not accept responsibility for the loss of any data or any other damage caused by following the instructions in this publication. We always recommend that you keep a backup of your hard disk data and ensure that you check all files for viruses before installing or using any new software. None of the information in this guide is intended as legal advice. All articles are for information purposes only. Websites mentioned in this publication are not affiliated to or controlled by the publisher. We are not responsible for the contents of these sites or any changes made to them.
All contents © Cranberry Publishing Ltd 2008
Company registration number: 4987058